Disability Program "Navigator" Initiative

Department of Labor

FACT SHEET
July, 2009

A new position, the Disability Program Navigator, was established in One-Stop Career Centers throughout the country to better inform people with disabilities about the work support programs available at DOL's One-Stop Career Centers.

Complex rules surrounding entitlement programs, along with fear of losing cash assistance and health benefits, can often discourage people with disabilities from working. The DPN Initiative is jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). Since 2003, it has been funded for approximately $112 million from DOLETA and $12 million from SSA. DOLETA and SSA have established the DPN Initiative to better inform SSI/SSDI beneficiaries and other people with disabilities about the work support programs available at DOLETA-funded One-Stop Career Centers. These Centers provide information, training, and other employment-related services at a single customer-friendly location.

The DPN Initiative is: developing new/sustaining ongoing partnerships to achieve seamless, comprehensive, and integrated services; promoting the workforce investment system becoming Employment Networks under the Ticket-to-Work Program; blending/braiding resources to leverage funding for individual customers; creating systemic change; and expanding the capacity of the workforce investment system to serve customers with disabilities and employers.

Overview

- DOL has entered into cooperative agreements with the state level workforce system in 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands with over 425 DPNs located throughout the country.
- DOL is training the Navigators on SSA employment support programs, One-Stop partner funded programs, and other programs that impact successful employment.
- DOL and SSA are working together to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Navigator pilot.
- Disability Program Navigators are hired and employed by the state or local workforce system.
- Navigators are helping to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce.

For additional information contact: The Disability Team, DOLETA (202) 693-3844: http://www.doleta.gov/disability/

The DPN Position

Disability Program Navigators:

- Guide One-Stop Career Center staff in helping people with disabilities access and navigate the various programs that impact their ability to gain/retain jobs.
- Facilitate integrated, seamless, and comprehensive services in One-Stop Career Centers to persons with disabilities.
- Improve linkages to the employer community and develops demand-responsive strategies to meet their recruitment and retention needs.
- Facilitate the transition of in- or out-of-school youth with disabilities to obtain employment and economic self-sufficiency.
- Serve as a resource on programs that impact the ability of persons with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.
- Bring together multiple partners to foster a collaborative effort by building Interagency Action Committees to address systems level barriers and Integrated Resource Teams to address individual level barriers to employment job seekers with disabilities experience.